

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 31, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-259-Grand Coulee-Bell Corridor, 77/2 to 84/4) **Project No. V-S-05/02**

to: Tom Murphy
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/Bell-1

Proposed Action: Vegetation management along the Grand Coulee-Bell 115 kV and 230 kV Transmission Line Corridor Right of Way (ROW) from structure 77/2 to 84/4.

Location: The project is located in Spokane County, Washington in the BPA Spokane Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to remove tall growing and noxious vegetation from the right of way and access roads that can potentially interfere with the operation, maintenance, and reliability of the transmission lines. Unwanted, tall growing, and noxious vegetation, danger trees, and reclaim trees will be removed and/or controlled inside the ROW using selective and nonselective methods that may include hand cutting, mowing, and herbicidal treatment. Vegetation management work will occur between structures 77/2 to 84/4 of the subject transmission line. This proposal covers the right-of-way width of 400 feet totaling about 339 acres of treated area.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for this project in accordance with the requirements identified in the Bonneville Power Administrations Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285).

Land along the project corridor consists of private property with minor holdings owned by the State. Primary uses for lands within the project area include small woodlot management, ornamental tree management, hiking and recreational pathways and residential uses.

Section 3 of the checklist identifies the natural resources present in the area of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are listed in Section 3.1 of the Vegetation Management Checklist. Trees in riparian zones will be selectively cut to include only those that are within 50 feet of the conductor at maximum sag. Trees will be topped where shrubs are not present to provide shade and a silt buffer. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams.

The following herbicide buffers will be implemented as per BPA's Vegetation Management Program for the project: Spot and basal treatment using Triclopyr BEE (i.e. Garlon 4) will maintain a 35-foot buffer from any stream, pond, wetland, or other sensitive habitat. Spot and basal treatment using either Glyphosate (i.e. Accord or Rodeo) or Triclopyr TEA (i.e. Garlon 3A) can be applied up to the waters edge.

Although not anticipated, any localized herbicide use will be limited to either Triclopyr BEE using a 100-foot buffer or Glyphosate using a 35-foot buffer of any stream, pond, wetland, or other sensitive habitat. For any initial or follow up broadcast treatment with Triclopyr TEA on sprouting stumps or brush, a 35-foot buffer will be maintained from any stream, ponds, wetlands, or sensitive areas.

No drinking water, irrigation wells, or water supplies were identified along the rights of way with the exception of a lagoon located between structures 82/4 to 82/6. Any herbicide use near this lagoon will maintain a 150-foot buffer.

T&E Species and Habitats: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project will have any effects on any listed species. A species list was reviewed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on May 17, 2005, identifying threatened and endangered species and Critical Habitat Units potentially occurring in the project area. In addition, a review of species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries was conducted. A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species and designated critical habitat for the project. A determination of "No Effect" was made for Essential Fish Habitat waters that occur in the project area.

Cultural Resources: Vegetation management activities are not anticipated to affect cultural resources. Telephone contact was made to the Spokane Tribe seeking comment on planned activities. No issues of historical significance were cited. In addition, no traditional cultural properties or uses were identified by the Colville Tribe along this stretch of ROW during the environmental impact analysis process for the Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV transmission line, which replaced the Grand Coulee-Bell 115-kV No. 1 line on this corridor. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and the appropriate tribe, the BPA Environmental Representative and the BPA archeologist will be notified.

Monitoring: The right-of-way identified in the checklist will be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all hazard trees have been removed from these areas. Followup monitoring for vegetation control will occur in the fall of 2005.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that (1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; (2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. This Supplement Analysis also finds the proposed actions will not affect threatened or endangered species. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Joseph Sharpe for
Michael A. Rosales
Physical Scientist - Environmental

CONCUR: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer (acting)

DATE: 5/31/2005

Attachment:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination

cc:
K. Pierce – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
M. Rosales – KEPR/Bell-1
H. Adams – LC-7
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
D. Labrosse – TFS/Bell-1
J. Lahti – TFS/Bell-1
M. Borrows – TFSF/Bell
Environmental File – KEC
Official File – KEP (EQ-14)

Mrosales:mr:4722:5/31/2005 (KEP-KEPR/BELL-1-W:\EP\2005 FILES\EQ-14-Supplement Analysis\FEIS-0285-SA-259-GC-BELL.doc)